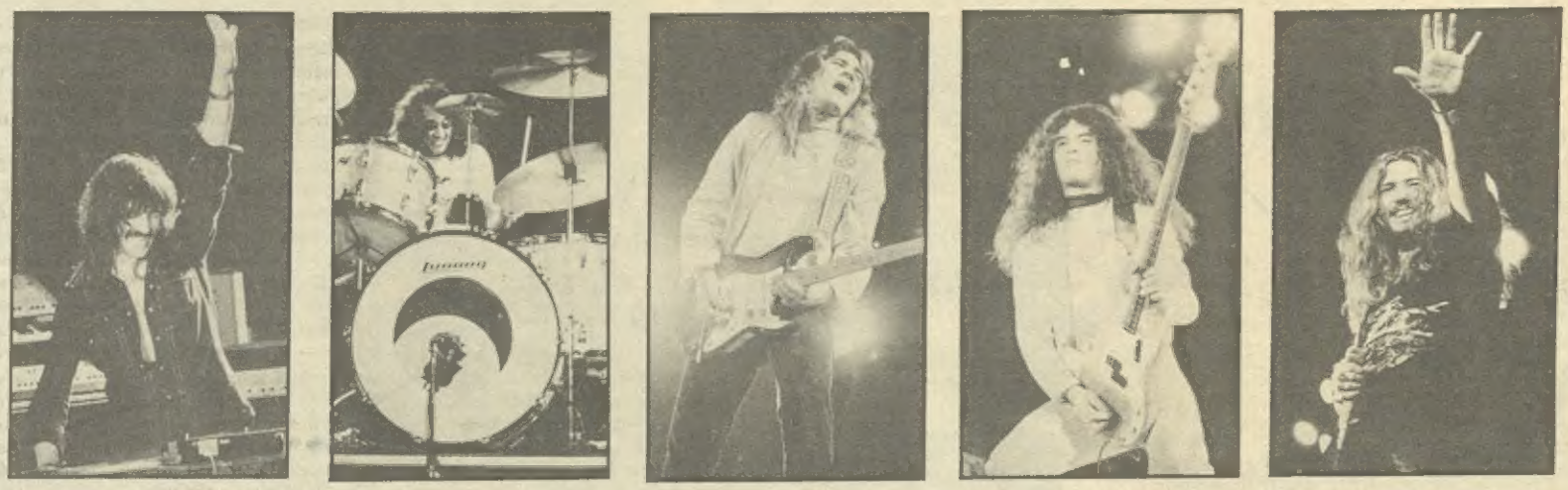

# Shades of Deep Purple

*Come taste the band (from left): David Coverdale, Ian Paice, Jon Lord, Tommy Bolin, Glenn Hughes*

## by Geoff Barton

# Shades of Deep Purple

*JON LORD: his 'Concerto' was the turning point*

'ADVANCED ENGLISHMEN on visit to Roskilde, runs the headline.

'On Saturday, an English group, Roundabout, had its world premier in Taastrup. Last night, it was the Roskilde residents' turn to see the fantastic group.

'Roundabout played modern, advanced beat music as you have never heard before. If you are going to compare them with any other groups it must be Vanilla Fudge, but Roundabout had a much stronger beat and at times made the air shiver with their lovely beat-tunes.

'Last night they went wild and were lost in the music and at certain times it looked as if the guitarist Ritchie Blackmore was berserk and his guitar too. Sometimes the group was wild and thundering, others they played quiet and beautiful arrangements.'

The first entry in the bulging, yellowing Deep Purple press clippings file — from 1968, a stumbling, amateurish translation of a short, but nonetheless enthusiastic, Danish newspaper report, concerning a band called Roundabout.

Roundabout — who, a matter of weeks after this try-out tour of Denmark, were to become known, more familarly, as Deep Purple.

However clumsy the above review, one forceful fact is all too evident — the writer, whoever he may have been, considered Roundabout-Deep Purple to be pretty hot stuff. 'Only people who have not heard this band can doubt that they will go straight to the top. For those who have heard them, there is no doubt,' he enthused.

And, you know, in a jumbled and confused way, he was right.

IN 1968, Deep Purple were, as ever, a five man band — Ritchie Blackmore, guitar; Jon Lord, keyboards; Ian Paice, drums; Nick Simper, bass and Rod Evans, vocals.

And really, right from the beginning, it was virtually assured that the band would be a resounding success.

Each member, prior to Purple's formation, had had a chequered and only mildly successful musical career. It was hoped that the amalgam of five — uh — losers, if you like, five people who had often been on the brink of success but had somehow never quite managed to make that final, crucial step, would create a world-beating outfit.

The idea stemmed from erstwhile Purple managers-cum-backers, Tony Edwards and John Coletta, but basically Jon Lord and Ritchie Blackmore are responsible for the band's existence.

Deep Purple were formed in February, 1968. Lord and Blackmore were first asked to join a new band by someone called Chris Curtis. When plans fell through however, they carried on having found financial assistance in the aforementioned Edwards and Coletta.

LEICESTER BORN, Jon Lord's musical career began at the early age of nine, when he took up classical piano at his father's request. At first, he loathed it, but eventually this hatred grew into an all-encompassing love.

At one time, he hoped to make his future as a classical pianist or organist, but he gave up the idea in his late teens, turning to jazz and pop, ambitiously hoping to build either or both of these facets of music into something of a minor art form.

But meanwhile, he was also being trained to be an actor. He studied at the Central School Of Speech And Drama, one year behind Lynn Redgrave and Julie Christie in fact, and spent his spare time playing in groups in order to scrape a living.

Eventually, Lord moved to London permanently, hoping to get a job in the theatre. When he found that he couldn't, he undertook his first full-time job in music, playing blues piano for £2 a night in an outfit called the Bill Ashton Combo.

Later, he joined a band called Red Bludd's Musicians, an experimental blues group. Art Wood, brother of Ronnie, sang with the band for some time and eventually, along with Lord and drummer Keef Hartley, he formed the Art Wood Combo which soon became the Artwoods, a group of some renown which lasted four years.

The Artwoods made eight singles, one of which was a minor hit, and one album, then split. Hartley was the first to leave, with Lord close behind him, in 1967.

Lord had decided to form his own band, or at least join a band in which he had more to say in its musical policy. By this time, he had also rediscovered the classics.

Finally, he became a member of the Flowerpot Men's backing group, where he met Nick Simper and — Ritchie Blackmore.

BLACKMORE'S STORY is as complex as Lord's. Born in Weston-Super-Mare, Blackmore started playing classical guitar at 11 and studied with a private tutor for a year.

His early influences were Big Jim Sullivan, who used to live very close to him, and Les Paul himself. Sullivan, who was playing with Marty Wilde at the time, taught Blackmore for another two-and-a-half years.

In his early teens, Blackmore found himself playing with such unlikely bands as the Detonators, the Safonites and Mike Dean And The Jaywalkers. His first professional job was as one of Screamin' Lord Sutch's Savages. He stayed with Sutch for one-and-a-half years, and has fond memories of charging through audiences wearing nothing but a leopard skin.

In 1962, he joined Mike Berry And The Outlaws, then came a period of session work, occasionally gigging with Neil Christian And The Crusaders, after Jimmy Page had left, Heinz and countless others. In 1964, he left Britain for Germany to play with an outfit called the Three Musketeers and to do more session work.

Eventually, he was enticed back to Britain permanently, when Edwards and Coletta had made plain their ideas to finance Deep Purple.

AND THE rest of the band?

Ian Paice's story is relatively simple. At age 18, someone gave him a violin. When he discovered he couldn't play it properly, he turned it upside down and started hitting it. He immediately became enamoured by the sound.

Selling the violin, Paice acquired a battered tom-tom and some biscuit tins. Soon enough, he had bought his first full kit for £32 and travelled around accompanying his father, who was a pianist and played waltzes and quicksteps.

Paice's first band was Georgie And The Rave-Ons, who later changed their name to the Shindigs. His premier professional gig was with a Windsor-based outfit called the M15, who finally became known as the Maze.

He met Blackmore in 1967 on the way to Italy, and then again some months later in Germany, where Blackmore was living at the time, in the Hamburg Starclub. Blackmore, who was by now already scouting around for prospective Purple members, wanted Paice to join there and then, but Paice declined because he needed the regular wage his own band was bringing in and couldn't afford to embark upon a 'risky' venture.

When he eventually turned up to audition for Purple in 1968, however, he brought along a vocalist, Edinburgh-born Rod Evans, who had been singing professionally with various bands since he was 15.

As for Nick Simper — after two years of gigging and doing sessions, he joined Johnny Kidd And The Pirates. He stayed with the band until Kidd's untimely death in a car accident, then did more sessions — notably with Lord Sutch — ultimately joining Purple.

SO THE scene was set — Deep Purple, 'formed almost overnight from handpicked musicians, when the British music scene was at an all-time low,' were up and raring to go.

A first single, 'Hush', the Billy Joe Royal song, previously covered by US Country person Joe South, was released in June 1968 and received favourable reactions.

'Positively startling R'n'B treatment,' wrote one reviewer. 'If you like electronic sounds with a pounding beat, wrapped around a good vocal, this one is for you. Deep Purple are a long way from Hoagy Carmichael, but they're good nonetheless.' offered another. Or, to cap it all, "Hush' starts off with the far-off howling of a wolf, before breaking into some hectic guitar and organ sounds. A real raver's record if there ever was one.'

At this point, it's interesting to note the naivete of music journalism around this time. The rock world may have been turning itself upside down and inside out, but reading through press cuttings from the late Sixties, you fail to get the slightest inkling, the merest impression that something akin to a musical revolution is happening.

There's a detachment, a sense of incomprehension and, somehow, even an air of outrage in some of the more staid publications. Perception, insight and the like are far from evident. Most strange.

In any case, despite a feverish reception and EMI's supreme confidence in Deep Purple as a band — they issued 'Hush' in a special sleeve, showing a dark, moody picture of them — the single failed dismally, in Britain at least. In America however, it was a far, far different story.

FOR THE STATES, Purple had signed to the newly-formed corporation called Tetragrammaton Records, a rogueish outfit founded in part by 'I Spy' TV star Bill Cosby and headed by Roy Silver, the man who 'discovered' Cass Elliot, Bob Dylan and Tiny Tim.

Securing US recording rights for a huge sum and guaranteeing them a quarter of a million pounds — a lot of money, in those days — over a three year period, the company booked a string of States one-nighters and TV appearances for the band, giving them complete publicity overkill. Their policy paid off. Handsomely.

'Hush' sold 200,000 copies in a fortnight and a debut album 'Shades Of Deep Purple' sold 30,000 within days of its US July release. Subsequently, one radio station felt the need to play a track from 'Shades Of every 15 minutes, another spun 'Hush' every hour on the hour for days on end. Not surprisingly, in four weeks 'Hush' was on the fringes of the States top ten.

■ *Continued page 27*

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**Deep Purple fly home today for their first series of British concerts in two years. They play four major venues from the 11th to the 15th March.**

### EXCITED!

'We've been a long time gone', said founder-member Ian Paice, 'so naturally we're excited about coming home and seeing all our friends again.'

Purple have played Japan, Australasia, Indonesia and The States on this current tour where, in the traditional Deep Purple way, they've been exciting audiences and critics alike.

They arrive here at the peak of their musical energies to say 'thanks' to their British fans.

### ...AND HOW

The concerts have been scheduled for Leicester, Wembley (two nights), Glasgow and Liverpool.

It's going to be a sell-out tour, so get in fast to Come Taste the Band.

DEEP PURPLE—live and kicking!

★★★★★★★★

★ **Deep Purple at large!**
from left to right
★ Ian Paice
★ Tommy Bolin
★ Jon Lord
★ David Coverdale
★ Glenn Hughes

★★★★★★★★

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★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★★

...SOUNDS TERRIFIC

LOOK FOR THE PURPLE LABEL

# Shades of Deep Purple

■ From page 24

Like the 'New Faces' opening cartoon, Deep Purple had been stripped of their street clothes, had had velvets and satins thrust at them, were pushed into the glaring limelight — and had become overnight stars.

'Mr. Tony Edwards, backer, said, "In seven months, the cost of running this band has been £1,600. Thanks to the American public, this has proved to be a worthwhile investment".'

Times change, eh?

FESTIVALS CHANGE, too Riding high on their Stateside success, in August 1968 Purple prepared to play Britain at the Eighth National Jazz And Blues Festival, to be held at Kempton Park Racecourse in Sunbury.

Fine, you say? The chance of a good, prestigious appearance for the band? Or perhaps not.

The fest., which ran over three days, showcased 150 — count 'em, 150 — bands and artists. Each day was divided up into several 'sessions'. Purple were due to appear on a Saturday evening 'session', running from 7pm to 11pm.

Which sounds fine — until you discover that nine other bands were also set to play within the confines of those four hours. The Nice, Jeff Beck, the Crazy World Of Arthur Brown, Ten Years After, Tyrannosaurus Rex, Joe Cocker, Night People, Clouds and Ginger Baker!

"All right boys, a fifteen minute set and that's your lot. Any longer, and I'll confisciate your PA system — that Marshall 100 watt amp over there."

THE DAILY Express had spotted a trend — picking up on Purple's sudden US popularity, the paper goes into a long spiel about how America provides a lucrative market for British musicians and how the country is 'giving hope to second time around players, who failed to make ti big during the Beatles-inspired pop boom'.

Meanwhile, before a second visit to the States, Purple appear on David Frost's 'Frost On Sunday' show. Frost dubs them as the band who has managed to bridge the divide between 'pyschedelic underground and teenybopper music'.

Much raving follows, and Purple are toted as The Next Big Thing.

But it seems to me that most people were missing the point. Deep Purple were, in those days, merely a gimmicky band that relied heavily upon the reworkings of other people's songs. Except for one standout Blackmore-Evans-Lord track 'Mandrake Root', the remaining band compositions on 'Shades Of' pale against tacky versions of 'Help' (which, if it is to be believed, was nonetheless favourably endorsed by the Beatles), 'Hey Joe' and 'I'm So Glad'.

Indeed, these cover renditions were to prove the mainstay of Purple's live act for some years to come.

Due to public demand, 'Hush' is re-released in Britain in September 1968, but it still fails to make an impression. Meanwhile, Purple are set for an extensive eight week American tour from October 1 to coincide with the US rush-release of their second album.

The band are ensured a large sum of money for the first 20 dates and, by way of celebration, each member spends £400 on clothes for the States tour — velvet suits, trousers, shirts and long suede coats . . .

'UNKNOWN BRITISH group takes US by storm,' reads the headline. 'A tour of 80,000 air miles has earned £250,000 for Deep Purple and a single 'Hush' has soared to number three in the charts.'

As mentioned before, Tertagrammaton were going overboard for the band, releasing single after single ('Kentucky Woman', then 'River Deep, Mountain High', both from the second album 'Book Of Taliesyn', while Britain has to contend with 'Emaretta', apparently a tribute to a girl in the New York cast of 'Hair') and, if reports are true, raking in large amounts of cash behind the band's back.

By January 1969, with the band a little less than a year old, Deep Purple are set to embark upon their third States tour. Indeed, for a large part of '69 the band concentrate on America.

When 'Book Of Taleisyn' is finally made available in Britain in the Summer, some six months after its US release, it is found to be on EMI's newly-formed contemporary Harvest label. At virtually the same time in the States, however, the third LP 'Deep Purple' is issued. Some US States object to its cover, a black and white reproduction of the Hieronymous Bosch triptych 'Garden Of Earthly Delights', featuring nude figures.

But, by this time, it has become all too evident that events were running ahead of themselves.

Ultimately, the pace proves to be too fierce — in July, Rod Evans and Nick Simper leave, ostensibly because of a diversity of musical ideas within the group, and are replaced almost instantaneously by two ex-Episode Six men, vocalist Ian Gillan and bassist Roger Glover.

*1968, the original line-up (from left) Jon Lord, Ritchie Blackmore, Nick Simper, Rod Evans (vocals) and Ian Paice*

*1970: (from left) Blackmore, Lord, Roger Glover (seated), Ian Gillan, Paice*

*1974: Glenn Hughes, David Coverdale (top), Paice, Blackmore, Lord*

LITTLE IS heard of either Evans or Simper after this time.

Evans re-emerges for a while as part of a Capricorn outfit called Captain Beyond, together with lead guitarist, ex-Iron Butterfly member Rhino Reinhardt; ex-original ('In-A-Gadda-Vida') Iron Butterfly bassist Lee Dorman and one-time Johnny Winter drummer Bobby Caldwell.

Simper, meanwhile, joins Marsha Hunt's backing band, then forms a band called Pleasure and later joins Warhorse, a band who recorded for Vertigo for some time.

"THIS split will not affect our plans," revealed Blackmore, in a then-rare British newspaper interview. In between putting down the British public for failing to buy Deep Purple records ("We don't care whether we make it here or not," he said, in one heated moment), he expressed his great enthusiasm for the new band.

Ian Gillan was born in Chiswick. He can count Jess Thunder And The Moonshiners, the Javelins and Wainwright's Gentlemen (alongside a couple of members of the Sweet) amongst his previous bands. Prior to his joining Episode Six, he was trying to pursue a solo career as, of all people, Garth Rocket.

Roger Glover, meanwhile, hailing from Brecon, South Wales, was first introduced to music as a profession through his interest in folk. He took up bass in a trio where he was considered the worst guitarist of the three, then spent two-and-a-half years at Hornsey Art College before quitting in 1965 to join Episode Six.

Episode Six were a strictly commercial outfit. They made 14 singles in all, none of which were substantial hits in Britain, although some were successful on the on the Continent. Mick Underwood, drummer with the band, used to play with Blackmore in the Outlaws. When it became known that Purple were looking for a replacement vocalist and bassist, Underwood went about introducing Gillan and Glover, who were becoming disenchanted by Episode Six's continued lack of success, to the band.

Purple were suitably impressed.

TOGETHER ONCE again in Britain, Deep Purple played their first gig with the new line-up at the Speakeasy in mid-1969. It goes OK, and the band get set to undertake a full-scale British tour.

While the new outfit gigs around the country, news filters through to the effect that Jon Lord plans to perform a rock-classical concert at London's Royal Albert Hall, matching the talents of Deep Purple with those of the Philharmonic Orchestra. There's much public speculation as to the outcome of this venture, overshadowing the eventual British release of the 'Deep Purple' album.

In retrospect, this concert, which was to take the form of Purple's fourth LP 'Concerto For Group And Orchestra', was very much the turning point for the band in Britain. Pre-concert press coverage was extensive.

'What will be the impact of this new and exciting sound?'

'How will it affect the pop and classical scenes?'

'The most exciting concert to take place since the Albert Hall opened its doors!'

Ran the advertisement blurb.

The Albert Hall's managers received letters protesting that they were 'betraying the dignity of serious music' and Jon Lord himself was interviewed on many occasions.

"The concept of my Concerto," he said at the time, "is to show symphonic music and pop music at odds with each other, and then meld them both together."

But, the morning after the concert, the Daily Mail proclaimed, 'Why should they meld? The gulf between the two types of music remains wide and unabridged'.

Reaction to Lord's adventurous undertaking was, at best, lukewarm.

'A naive, but engaging concert.' 'Mr. Lord's symphonic writing is of poor quality, and his pop revealed itself as very limited music.' 'About 4,500 people heard the five young popsters, with their shoulder-length hair and brightly-coloured clothes. . .'

BUT STILL, it was 1969, nearing the end of a decade, and people were readying their predictions and anticipations for the next 10 years. Because Lord's concerto had taken place towards the end of the year and was still fresh people's minds, Deep Purple enjoyed yet another burst of publicity.

'A mighty new force has shaken the roots of pop music, brought about by the arranged marriages of pop stars and classical musicians,' expounded one paper. 'Is it a phoney, dangerous course? Or the path to real progression?'

In the midst of all the fuss Blackmore's plaintive cry that Deep Purple were 'really just a heavy rock band' went unnoticed.

Although the Concerto brought the band to the attention of a large part of the British public, Deep Purple were being tagged with the wrong label. 'Pretentious,' people were calling them, 'a symphonic rock group', other unlikely titles.

The band could see that, if they weren't careful, this venture into the classics could have an adverse effect.

Tetragrammaton were in trouble in the States — finally, their catalogue would be taken over by Warner Brothers — and the band were anxious to prove their full worth in Britain. So the US market was allowed to simmer.

As 'Concerto For Group And Orchestra' made the album charts in early 1970, the band became fully conscious of the necessity to make their next album — which, in fact, would be the debut studio LP with the new line-up — a hot cookie, a killer, quashing forever the views that the band was full of latter day Mozarts.

'"Concerto' did us a lot of good from the publicity angle," remarked Ian Paice, "but it gave the wrong impression. People expect us to do each gig with a ninety piece orchestra."

In between a back-breaking schedule of European concerts, Purple painstakingly put together the new album. Playing five nights per week, reports do indeed begin to filter in to the effect that Deep Purple are, first and foremost, a rock band.

'Paice kicked over his drums and Blackmore physically toppled two six feet speaker columns on top of his guitar.' 'They're not just another noisy climax group like Led Zeppelin.' 'Concerto For Group And Orchestra' is not what this band is about. . .'

The final testimony came in June when, after several setbacks, 'Deep Purple In Rock' was released and was immediately acclaimed for the fine rock album it was — and still is.

"It's harder, more raucous and exciting than anything we've done before. I hate our first three albums," said Blackmore, in characteristically sardonic tones.

The line-up change, the arrival of Gillan and Glover, had done wonders. For the first time on a Purple studio album, all tracks had been written by the band — no trashy cover versions were to be found.

'In Rock' begins with the purposefully cliched 'Speed King' with much frenzied guitar, but the standout track is, obviously, 'Child In Time', featuring some breathtaking vocal pyrotechnics from Ian Gillan, reducing any of Rod Evans' previous efforts to complete to complete insignificance.

Disc said, "Deep Purple In Rock' took six months to make and is the band's first studio album for a year. The wait was not in vain. 'In Rock' will become a monument, in the history of Deep Purple. And it wasn't such a rash prediction, for all that.

Finally, Purple had made it in Britain. A single, 'Black Night', received rave reviews comparable to those lavished upon the album and found its way into the top five — alongside Black Sabbath's 'Paranoid', in fact — in July. In some listings, it made it right to the top. Interest in the group was at a premium and Purple were once again snowed under with work.

Jon Lord was asked by the BBC to write the 'Gemini Suite', to be premiered at London's Festival Hall at a special presentation in September; Ian Gillan was chosen to play/sing the role of Christ on the 'Jesus Christ Superstar' double album; the band itself played Hyde Park in July alongside the Edgar Broughton Band, the Third Ear Band and

■ Continued page 30

# Shades of Deep Purple

# You keep

"THIS IS my twenty-fourth American tour," remarks Jon Lord, staring abstractly into his steadily diminishing glass of Cognac, "my twenty-fourth."

Have they all been with Deep Purple?

He nods affirmatively, his empty gaze changing to one of mock despair, and finishes off his drink in one large gulp.

"But, you know," he continues, "life on the road isn't that bad any more. In the band's early days, it was a trifle hectic. Now, eight years on, we can afford to relax a little."

Indeed. A Deep Purple US tour is, today, a smoothly-organised, well put together affair — lots of long, black limousines which, even in the midst of a queue of similarly tank-like American cars, cause heads to turn.

No soundchecks, the roadies are veterans too, it's a case of on the stage, off the stage, with a one-and-a-half hour set in between.

There's even a customised plane, with the name 'Deep Purple' emblazoned on its side, to fly you the 200 mile-upwards distances from gig to gig.

Yes, they can afford to relax a little — but they daren't become complacent.

* * *

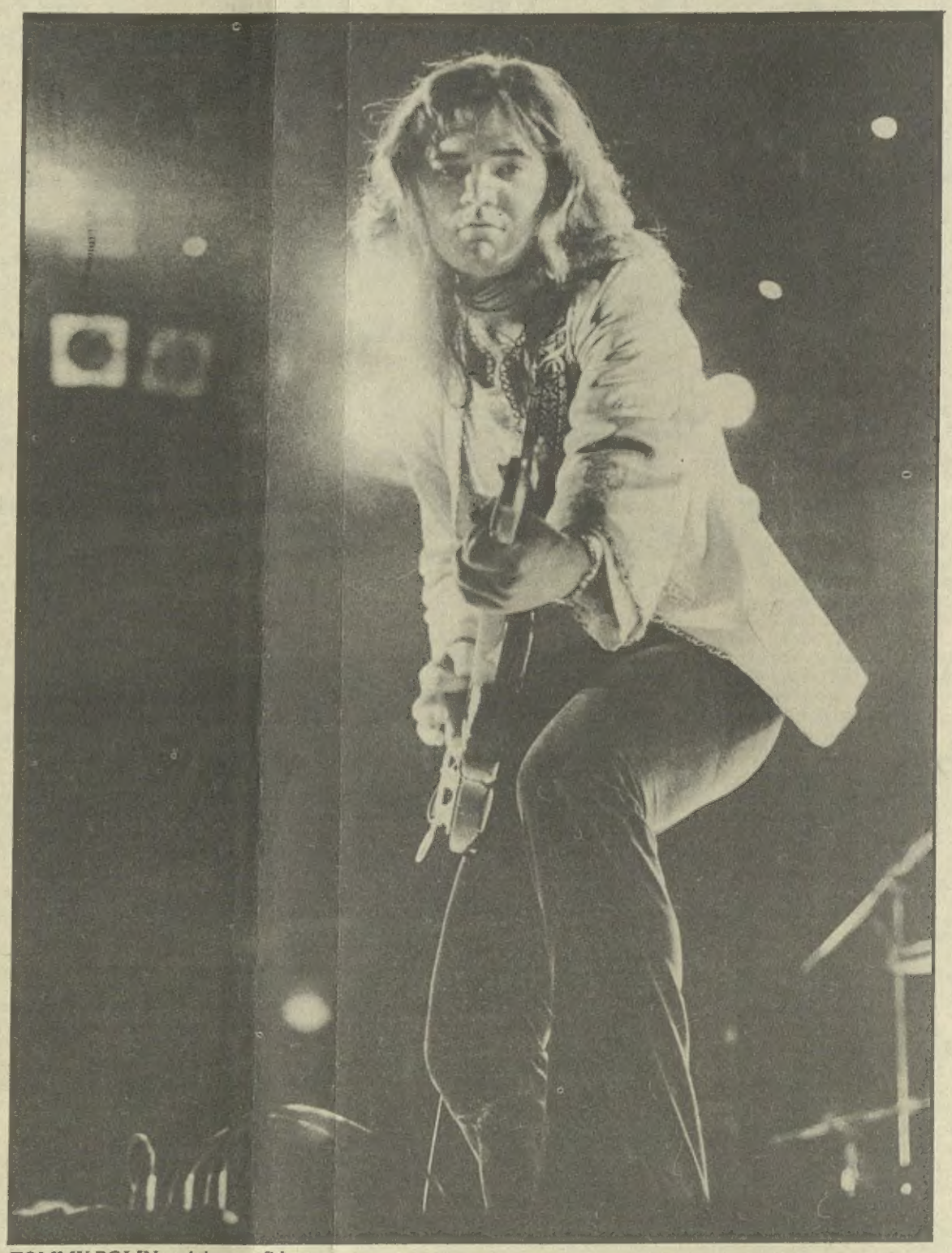
Jet lagged, weary and fighting off a flu bug, I arrive at the airport of San Antonio, Texas, in the early evening. Lois, Purple's delectable American publicist, is there to meet me. The band, she informs me, are playing tonight. Did I want to go to the concert? Or would I like to go back to the hotel instead, to sleep off the journey and start afresh tomorrow?

The prospect of a soft bed sounds tempting. . . but no, although I'll doubtless have several opportunities to see the band during my stay, curiousity gets the better of me. I'm interested to see new guitarist Tommy Bolin, I'm anxious to find out if the various disparaging reports about the band that have filtered across Britain since the beginning of this tour are founded and hold water.

"Deep Purple *are* going to break up," a colleague had said, with a good deal of conviction, just before I left Britain for the States.

Are they?

Certainly, it seemed possible, watching the band from the back of the stage on that first night. Tommy Bolin, with streaked hair, tight velvet trousers and snakeskin boots, seemed less than convincing in his role as lead guitarist, front man, mainstay of the outfit.



*TOMMY BOLIN: gaining confidence*

Vocalist David Coverdale spent an inordinate amount of time offstage, graciously allowing bassist Glenn Hughes additional singing space.

Jon Lord seemed only mildly interested in the proceedings, his keyboard solo, save for the endearing snatch he played of 'Yellow Rose Of Texas', being mechanical and uninspiring.

Only Ian Paice had a good time, battling it out with his drumkit, his wiry hair flying in the breeze of the fan behind him.

It was, in all, disappointing.

But now, looking back, having seen subsequent sets at Abilene, Fort Worth and with the whole trip culminating with a supremely powerful concert at Houston Coliseum, I can safely claim true enthusiasm for this incarnation of the band. There are some faults, admittedly, but overall, I'm happy to report, Deep Purple are alive and kicking. Often fiercely.

But it was rough to start off with, touch and go for a while. Much of my initial reluctance to accept Purple Mk. IV stemmed, obviously, from the absence of Ritchie Blackmore. Tommy Bolin's talents as a guitarist are not in question here — it's just that he often fails to impress a positive identity onstage.

He's not flashy enough — well, maybe 'flashy' is the wrong work. Let's say that he fails to flaunt his expertise, inflate his ego, straighten his shoulders and say, 'Hey, I'm Deep Purple's new guitarist. I'm better than Ritchie Balckmore. Here, I'll show you what I mean. . .'

It took the aforementioned Houston concert to fully dispel any doubts and completely lay Blackmore's ghost to rest — up until that time, things had looked decidedly dicey for the band.

Flying to Abilene the next day, I voiced my fears, albeit in a restrained manner, to the now-bearded David Coverdale. I mentioned that, as far as I could tell, 'Come Taste The Band', the debut LP with the new line-up, had had a pretty cool reception from Purple fans and critics alike.

"The last thing I heard, which was at the beginning of December, the album had sold 130,000 in Britain," Coverdale counters, "I think at one stage it was at number nine in the charts, which is cool, Christ, what do people want? Worldwide, the album had sold well. I, for one, am not complaining," he concludes, brusquely.

I asked him for his honest opinion of the album.

"It's the freshest thing Purple have done since I joined the band," he proclaims, "posssibly even since 'Machine Head'. I can only speak personally of course, but I'm very proud of the performance of each musician on the album.

"I'm very happy with my progression as a singer and as a writer. 'Come Taste The Band' has, lyrically and melodically, my best work on it to date. I can still listen to it after six months of living with it, which is incredible, amazing."

As I said before, Coverdale spent a large amount of time offstage during the San Antonio concert, allowing Glenn Hughes additional space to exercise his own vocal chords. I wondered if he found his role in Purple's current stage show rather restricting.

"Oh yeah — but I have no-one to blame for that but myself. I suggested the songs without realising how limiting they were, for me at least. They're very monotone. I miss doing 'Mistreated', we'll probably get that together for the British tour. But after all, I'm one-fifth of a concept and at the moment it's very frustrating for me, because I know I can sing.

"Also, at the moment, we're trying to get Tommy Bolin across — a lot of the act is centred around him, the same as it used to be around myself and Glenn, when we first started.

"But it's really been all right so far — this tour's profitable musically and profitable financially, which makes a change. Socially, it's a lot more pleasurable."

As the conversation continues, it transpires that a solo project is uppermost in Coverdale's thoughts at the moment. Indeed, the ambition to prove oneself as a performer in one's own right is a current preoccupation of several Purple members.

As well as Coverdale, Hughes has a album forthcoming, as does Lord (admittedly, his fourth) and of course Bolin's 'Teaser' LP is currently on release. In many cases, these solo plans override any thoughts about Purple.

"I'm very keen to find out what I'm able to do in a studio, on my own," Coverdale reveals.

"When I record my album, it'll be without any members of the band, because if I used any of them it would be judged as a Purple recording, not my *own*. I'm going to sing on this album, rather than scream my balls off. I've been fucking screaming for years now, you know . . ."

That night, in Abilene, the gig goes OK. Not spectacularly well just OK.

Apparently, Texans are wont to do a lot of ski-ing at this time of year. Somehow, it seemed sadly ironic when, mid-way through Purple's set, a victim of a ski-ing accident who was present in the crowd thrust up his crutches high into the air, in a gesture that was supposed to denote appreciation.

To me, however, the action epitomised the situation onstage — Purple in some plight, having been dealt a serious injury with Blackmore's departure. They were limping along, struggling desperately to equal past glories and falling far short of succeeding.

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*pics by FIN COSTELLO*

# on moving

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## Shades of Deep Purple

# You keep on moving

*Is the new Purple as good as the old?*

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"THIS IS my twenty-fourth American tour," remarks Jon Lord, staring abstractly into his steadily diminishing glass of Cognac, "my twenty-fourth."

Have they all been with Deep Purple?

He nods affirmatively, his empty gaze changing to one of mock despair, and finishes off his drink in one large gulp.

"But, you know," he continues, "life on the road isn't that bad any more. In the band's early days, it was a trifle hectic. Now, eight years on, we can afford to relax a little."

Indeed. A Deep Purple US tour is, today, a smoothly-organised, well put together affair — lots of long, black limousines which, even in the midst of a queue of similarly tank-like American cars, cause heads to turn.

No soundchecks, the roadies are veterans too, it's a case of on the stage, off the stage, with a one-and-a-half hour set in between.

There's even a customised plane, with the name 'Deep Purple' emblazoned on its side, to fly you the 200 mile-upwards distances from gig to gig.

Yes, they can afford to relax a little — but they daren't become complacent.

* * *

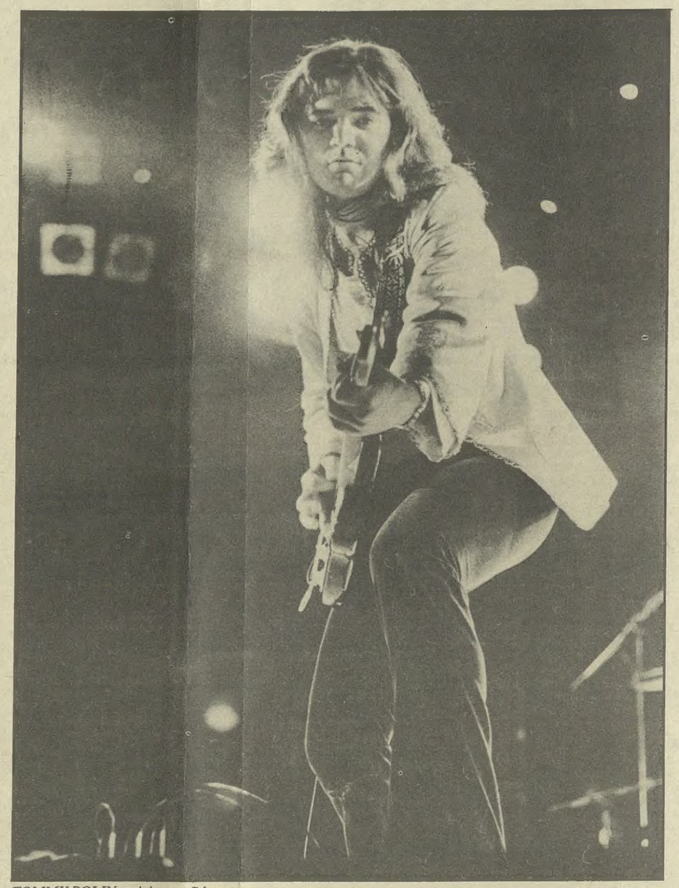
Jet lagged, weary and fighting off a flu bug, I arrive at the airport of San Antonio, Texas, in the early evening. Lois, Purple's delectable American publicist, is there to meet me. The band, she informs me, are playing tonight. Did I want to go to the concert? Or would I like to go back to the hotel instead, to sleep off the journey and start afresh tomorrow?

The prospect of a soft bed sounds tempting. . . but no, although I'll doubtless have several opportunities to see the band during my stay, curiousity gets the better of me. I'm interested to see new guitarist Tommy Bolin, I'm anxious to find out if the various disparaging reports about the band that have filtered across Britain since the beginning of this tour are founded and hold water.

"Deep Purple *are* going to break up," a colleague had said, with a good deal of conviction, just before I left Britain for the States.

Are they?

Certainly, it seemed possible, watching the band from the back of the stage on that first night. Tommy Bolin, with streaked hair, tight velvet trousers and snakeskin boots, seemed less than convincing in his role as lead guitarist, front man, mainstay of the outfit.



*TOMMY BOLIN: gaining confidence*

Vocalist David Coverdale spent an inordinate amount of time offstage, graciously allowing bassist Glenn Hughes additional singing space.

Jon Lord seemed only mildly interested in the proceedings, his keyboard solo, save for the endearing snatch he played of 'Yellow Rose Of Texas', being mechanical and uninspiring.

Only Ian Paice had a good time, battling it out with his drumkit, his wiry hair flying in the breeze of the fan behind him.

It was, in all, disappointing.

But now, looking back, having seen subsequent sets at Abilene, Fort Worth and with the whole trip culminating with a supremely powerful concert at Houston Coliseum, I can safely claim true enthusiasm for this incarnation of the band. There are some faults, admittedly, but overall, I'm happy to report, Deep Purple are alive and kicking. Often fiercely.

But it was rough to start off with, touch and go for a while. Much of my initial reluctance to accept Purple Mk. IV stemmed, obviously, from the absence of Ritchie Blackmore. Tommy Bolin's talents as a guitarist are not in question here — it's just that he often fails to impress a positive identity onstage.

He's not flashy enough — well, maybe 'flashy' is the wrong work. Let's say that he fails to flaunt his expertise, inflate his ego, straighten his shoulders and say, 'Hey, I'm Deep Purple's new guitarist. I'm better than Ritchie Balckmore. Here, I'll show you what I mean. . .'

It took the aforementioned Houston concert to fully dispel any doubts and completely lay Blackmore's ghost to rest — up until that time, things had looked decidedly dicey for the band.

Flying to Abilene the next day, I voiced my fears, albeit in a restrained manner, to the now-bearded David Coverdale. I mentioned that, as far as I could tell, 'Come Taste The Band', the debut LP with the new line-up, had had a pretty cool reception from Purple fans and critics alike.

"The last thing I heard, which was at the beginning of December, the album had sold 130,000 in Britain," Coverdale counters, "I think at one stage it was at number nine in the charts, which is cool, Christ, what do people want? Worldwide, the album had sold well, I, for one, am not complaining," he concludes, brusquely.

I asked him for his honest opinion of the album.

"It's the freshest thing Purple have done since I joined the band," he proclaims, "possibly even since 'Machine Head'. I can only speak personally of course, but I'm very proud of the performance of each musician on the album.

"I'm very happy with my progression as a singer and as a writer. 'Come Taste The Band' has, lyrically and melodically, my best work on it to date. I can still listen to it after six months of living with it, which is incredible, amazing."

As I said before, Coverdale spent a large amount of time offstage during the San Antonio concert, allowing Glenn Hughes additional space to exercise his own vocal chords. I wondered if he found his role in Purple's current stage show rather restricting.

"Oh yeah — but I have no-one to blame for that but myself. I suggested the songs without realising how limiting they were, for me at least. They're very monotone. I miss doing 'Mistreated', we'll probably get that together for the British tour. But after all, I'm one-fifth of a concept and at the moment it's very frustrating for me, because I know I can sing.

"Also, at the moment, we're trying to get Tommy Bolin across — a lot of the act is centred around him, the same as it used to be around myself and Glenn, when we first started.

"But it's really been all right so far — this tour's profitable musically and profitable financially, which makes a change. Socially, it's a lot more pleasurable."

As the conversation continues, it transpires that a solo project is uppermost in Coverdale's thoughts at the moment. Indeed, the ambition to prove oneself as a performer in one's own right is a current preoccupation of several Purple members.

As well as Coverdale, Hughes has a album forthcoming, as does Lord (admittedly, his fourth) and of course Bolin's 'Teaser' LP is currently on release. In many cases, these solo plans override any thoughts about Purple.

"I'm very keen to find out what I'm able to do in a studio, on my own," Coverdale reveals.

"When I record my album, it'll be without any members of the band, because if I used any of them it would be judged as a Purple recording, not my *own*. I'm going to sing on this album, rather than scream my balls off. I've been fucking screaming for years now, you know . . ."

That night, in Abilene, the gig goes OK. Not spectacularly well just OK.

Apparently, Texans are wont to do a lot of ski-ing at this time of year. Somehow, it seemed sadly ironic when, mid-way through Purple's set, a victim of a ski-ing accident who was present in the crowd thrust up his crutches high into the air, in a gesture that was supposed to denote appreciation.

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*pics by FIN COSTELLO*

# Shades of Deep Purple

■ *From page 27*

Kevin Ayers' Whole World and then was booked to play at the National Jazz Society's tenth annual festival at Plumpton Racecourse in early August.

By all accounts, they set the place on fire — in more than one.

'The band brought the festival to a shattering climax,' reads the report. 'After a 20 minute version of 'Mandrake Root', guitarist Ritchie Blackmore set alight to a stack of amplifiers. After the fire had been extinguished, Blackmore heaved the charred remenants to the edge of the stage and kicked them off into the audience.

"'Actually, we meant to set the whole stage alight," said Blackmore afterwards.'

It all reaches a peak in October 1970 when, we are informed, 'Deep Purple mania sweeps Britain!' There are riots in Scotland and Tyneside when the band, booked to play relatively small halls and having to cope with new found fame, are confronted by hordes of ticketless fans.

Finally, poor old Joe South re-releases 'Hush' in December. It flops.

IN JANUARY 1971, after 'In Rock' has been in the charts for seven months, Purple managers John Coletta and Tony Edwards announce the formation of Purple Records and the band embark upon longest-ever British Tour — six weeks.

Everything's very much on the up-and-up — Purple play the Albert Hall, this time very much as a rock band, submitting a powerful, high-volume set that prompts the 'great noise debate', started after the British appearance of Grand Funk Railroad, to rage again. 'Strange Kind Of Woman' is released in February and edges into the charts in March. 'Fireball', the sixth album, is made available in September.

Despite highly complimentary reviews, it fails to equal the success of 'In Rock' which ultimately remains in the charts for a year. 'Fireball' reaches number three, but doesn't prove the have the staying power of the previous — it is found labouring in the chart's lower reaches after a mere ten weeks.

Sadly, it is a meandering and disappointing platter — the group, overly conscious that they had to record a pulse-pounding follow up to 'In Rock', spent too much time in the recording studio, the end result being an inferior album.

And the pressures of constant touring were beginning to take their toll — members of the band collapse with a variety of illnesses over a period of time, the most serious being Ian Gillan, who was striken with hepatitis three days after the commencement of an important US tour, which was abruptly concelled.

ALTHOUGH 'FIREBALL' was, to many, an uninspired effort, it didn't seem to slow down Purple's impetus any. After a rescheduled American tour that took up the early months of 1972, the band spend March and April — trying — to record a new album in Montreux, Switzerland.

But, as all 'Smoke On The Water' aficionados know, a fire gutted the Montreux Casino, hub of the Golden Rose TV Festival, during a Frank Zappa concert and Purple found themselves without a place to record. The band were ousted from the Pavilion, their second choice, when local police complained about excessive volume. So. . .

*'We ended up at the Grand Hotel,*
*It was empty cold and bare.*
*But with a Rolling truck Stones thing just outside,*
*Working our music there.*
*With a few red lights and a few c/a beds,*
*We made a place to sweat. . .'*

They also ended up with perhaps the definitive Deep Purple album, 'Machine Head'.

FROM THEN on, did the steady rise become a slow, but noticeable decline? It's debatable.

After the December 1972 release of 'Made In Japan', a captivating double live set comprising, mostly, 'Machine Head' tracks, events certainly seemed to take a turn for the worse. The band lost much of its verve, its fanatical drive, during the first half of the next year.

Admittedly, it was around this time that Purple received their much-maligned tag as the 'loudest band in the world' — 117 decibels, three decibels quieter than the threshold of pain — but, by now, several of the band had become disillusioned with life in a rock outfit. Gillan and Glover in particular, who left in June and July respectively, and, if the truth be known, Ritchie Blackmore.

It took the guitarist untill 1975 to make the break completely, however.

David Coverdale, the 'singing salesman' from Redcar, and Trapeze leader Glenn Hughes were quickly slotted into the band in mid-1973 and Jon Lord, in ever-sensible manner, assessed the situation.

"The split was, in my view, inevitable. Deep Purple have always been highly successful, in terms of popularity, but more than once during the past few years I've thought that we were becoming too typecast. I'm very enthusiastic for the new band. That's not to imply criticism of the old outfit, because I enjoyed it while it lasted. I've great hopes for the new Purple, however,"

And certainly, Lord's hopes seemed genuinely founded when 'Burn' was released in early 1974. A Deep Purple album in every sense, well on a par with the last Gillan-Glover studio album 'Who Do We Think We Are', a safe passage into the future seemed assured, both Coverdale and Hughes proving themselves to be well-chosen replacements.

But soon enough, Blackmore was to become truly dissatisfied with his role in the band. It was a gradual process — his growing lack of enthusiasm was perhaps hinted at with 'Burn', it was certainly all too evident on the tail end of 1974 release 'Stormbringer'.

Ultimately, after much speculation as to his position within Purple and subsequent denials as to his departure, a projected solo album eventually emerged as 'Ritchie Blackmore's Rainbow'.

And Blackmore and Purple went their seperate ways.

CURRENTLY, I think I'd be right in saying that the situation is in a state of flux. Purple are about to prove themselves, for better or worse, in Britain with new guitarist, ex-Zephyr, one-time James Gang member Tommy Bolin, while Blackmore's popularity, at least as far as SOUNDS readers are concerned, appears undiminished. His 'Rainbow' album has sold well and the band, with the now-stable line-up of ex-Elf Ronnie James Dio, vocals; ex-Harlot Jimmy Bain, bass; Cozy Powell, late of Jeff Beck and Hammer, drums and Tony Caley, keyboards, are due to tour here in August.

Ian Gillan has recently re-emerged with a new band, Shand Grenade, as has Roger Glover with his 'Butterfly Ball' venture — an album, a book, and an all-star concert at the Albert Hall.

So, since 1968, Purple's wide and varied talents have fragmented in many different directions, bringing about the formations of several different bands and the appearances of numerous other projects, inter-related and otherwise.

**Obviously, just a single facet of all this will gain eventual dominance over the rest — but which? To end on a cliched note, time will tell.**

# Discography

## Albums

**SHADES OF DEEP PURPLE (Parlophone PCS 7055). (September 1968).**
**BOOK OF TALIESYN (Harvest SHVL 751). (July 1969).**
**DEEP PURPLE (Harvest SHVL 759). (November 1969).**
**CONCERTO FOR GROUP AND ORCHESTRA (Harvest SHVL 767). (January 1970).**
**DEEP PURPLE IN ROCK (Harvest SHVL 777). (June 1970).**
**FIREBALL (Harvest SHVL 793). (September 1971).**
**MACHINE HEAD (Purple TSPA 7504). (May 1972).**
**MADE IN JAPAN (Purple TSP 351). (December 1972).**
**WHO DO WE THINK WE ARE (Purple TPSA 7508). (March 1973).**
**BURN (Purple TPS 3505). (February 1974).**
**STORMBRINGER (Purple TPS 3508). (December 1974).**
**24 CARAT PURPLE (Purple TPSM 2002). (May 1975).**
**COME TASTE THE BAND (Purple TSPA 7515). (October 1975).**

## Solo albums

**JON LORD**
**'GEMINI SUITE' (Purple TSPA 7514).**
**'WINDOWS' (Purple TSPA 7513).**
**'THE FIRST OF THE BIG BANDS' — with Tony Ashton (Purple TPS 3507).**
**RITCHIE BLACKMORE**
**'RITCHIE BLACKMORE'S RAINBOW' (Oyster OYA 2001).**
**TOMMY BOLIN**
**'TEASER' (Nemporer K50208).**
**ROGER GLOVER**
**'BUTTERFLY BALL' (Purple TPSA 7514).**

## Singles

**Hush/One More Rainy Day (Parlophone RS 708) June 1968.**
**Emmaretta/Wring That Neck (Parlophone R 5763) Feb '69. 1969.**
**Hallelujah/April Party (Harvest HAR 5006) July 1969.**
**Black Night/Speed King (Harvest HAR 5020) May 1970.**
**Strange Kind Of Woman/I'm Alone (Harvest HAR 5003) February 1971.**
**Fireball/Demon's Eye (Harvest HAR 5003) October 1971.**
**Never Before/When A Blind Man Cries (Purple PUR 102) March 1972.**
**Might Just Take Your Life/Coronarias Reding (Purple) March 1974.**
**Keep On Moving/Love Child (Purple) March 1976.**

# Equipment

**JBL PA system**
**TOMMY BOLIN**
**Three Hiwatt 100 watt amps**
**Six Sound City Cabinets**
**Maestro Echoplex**
**GBX Stereo Noise Reducer**
**KEM phase**
**Fender Stratocaster guitars**
**Gibson Les Paul Guitar**
**Ernie Ball Strings**
**Ernie Pinkie Sliders**

**GLENN HUGHES**
**Two 200-watt Hiwatt amps**
**Four Reflex horn cabinets**
**KEM Phaser**
**Fender Precision bass**
**Yamaha guitar**

**IAN PAICE**
**Ludwig drum kit**
**Paiste cymbals**
**JON LORD**
**Hammond C3 organ**
**Honer B6 clavinet**
**Fender Rhodes piano**
**Two ARP Odyssey synthesizers**
**ARP Pro Soloist**
**ARP String Ensemble**
**Phaser (KEM)**
**Maestro ring modulator**
**Four Leslie cabinets containing Gauss 5840 speakers and JBL 2482 drivers**
**Crown DC 300A**
**All keyboard equipment custom built by KEM**

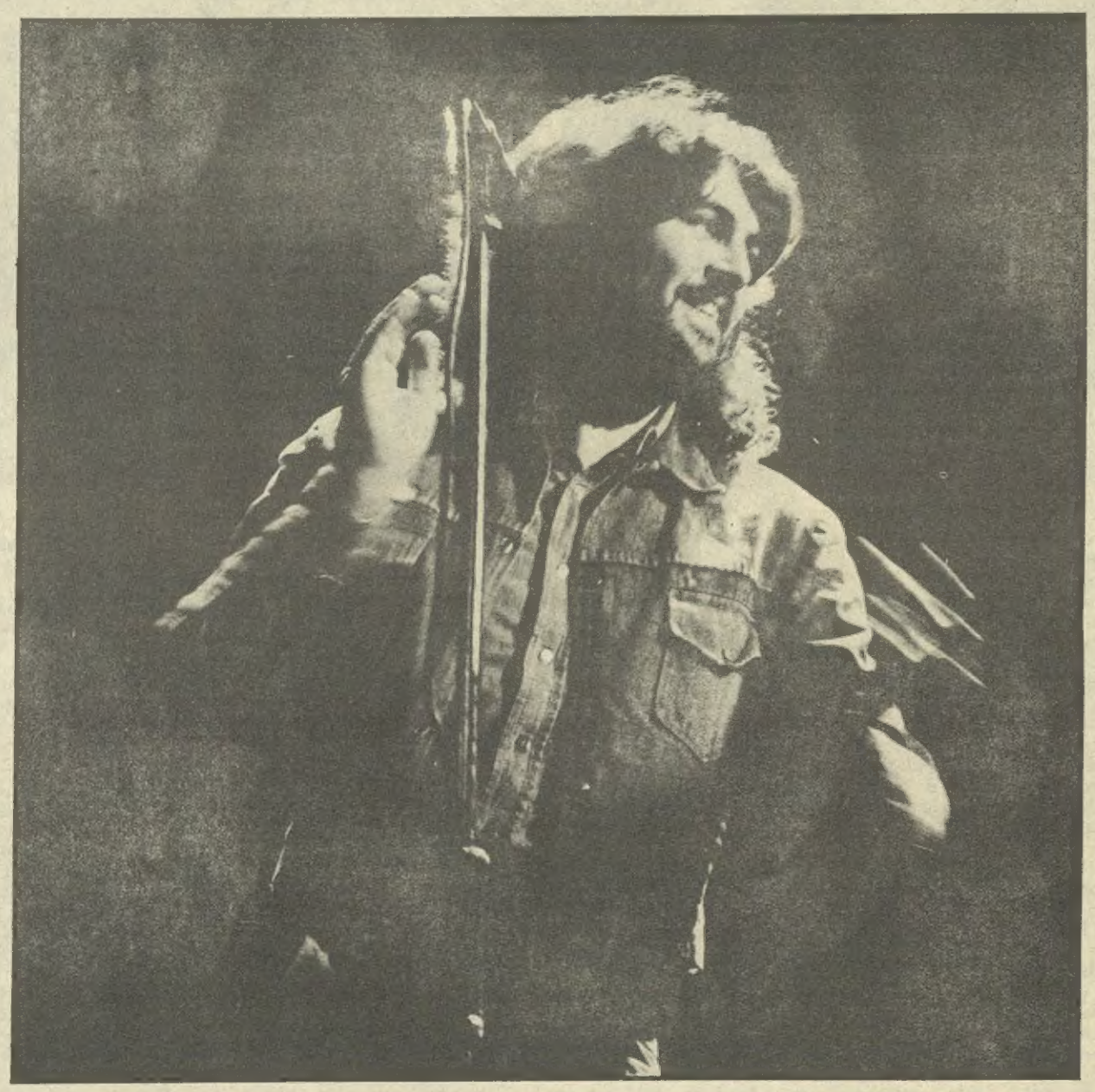
*JON LORD with Sounds scribe Geoff Barton (right). Pic by Larry E. Lent..*

Shades of Deep Purple

*Ian Gillan left Deep Purple to start a mini-cab firm but found that...*

# Rock and roll's in Gillan's soul

*by Pete Makowski*



*"We all came out to Montreux,*
*On the lake Geneva shoreline.*
*To make a record with a mobile,*
*We didn't have much time."**

**THE immortal words above, as y'all probably know, are from one of Deep Purple's most successful toons — 'Smoke On The Water'. It tells the true story of the great Casino disaster which occurred when the band went to Switzerland to record 'Machine Head'.**

Apart from being a pretty slick crap joint, the Casino was also a highly respected European venue and was going to be the location the band were going to record utilising a mobile unit. I say 'were' because just before they got there disaster struck.

It was on the night that Uncle Frank and the Mothers were playing there that, as the Purps put it: "some stupid with a flare gun, burned the place to the ground."

"Smoke on the water, a fire in the sky!"

Purple ended up recording the album at the Grand hotel. The casino had to be completely rebuilt, which brings us to the story.

* * *

Montreux is essentially a retiring home for rich persons. Like Brighton only a bit classier. It's a place where a millionaire can spend his last years in the healthiest of surroundings before pushing off to that great Swiss deposit account in the sky.

It's also the home of the Montreux jazz festival which, so the city's tourist officer informs me, is overtaking the legendary Newport jazz festival in popularity and repute.

Montreux is also now the location for a new venture. The Mountain recording studios which have been installed into the brand spanking new casino building and is run by Jack Grod and his attractive American singer wife Anita Kerr.

Although it started business last July in time for the aforementioned Jazz festival it celebrated its official press opening only a couple of weeks ago which is how I got there.

As it happened Ian Gillan and Roger Glover were present there at the same time on business. Gillan was completing work on his new album with Glover acting as producer.

Almost three years after the Casino incident the ex Purple vocalist and equally ex Purple bassist find themselves at the same location that acted as a catalyst for the album that broke Deep Purple worldwide. Could this be more than fate?

On with the story . . .

* * *

Since his departure from Purple, Gillan has remained fairly anonymous, apart from the occasional press release advertising his various new business ventures which included a motorcycle factory and a minicab firm.

There were sporadic reports of projected solo albums but nothing ever actually transpired and it seemed that we had lost our silver throated screamer to the world of high finance until one day, about a month ago, it was declared that Gillan was making his return with a new band and album.

Now it was obvious the guy really meant business!

Fortunately Gillan and Glover were residing at the same hotel as myself. Both parties had spent a heavy session in the studios the night previous to my arrival so I didn't expect any contract with them until later that evening. Surprisingly enough Glover managed to submerge from his well-earned rest quite early on in the afternoon.

Since he left the ranks of Purple, Glover has involved himself in quite a lot of production work, so lack of sleep and late nights have become a part of his daily repertoire. Eyes glazed and looking generally fragile he ordered a pot of tea and we sat ourselves in an unassuming corner of the hotel lounge for a chat.

ROGER Glover is a nice guy. He's one of those people you could spend all night talking with about anything and everything. He's a great observer of the music business and he'll always have an interesting answer for any question you care to confront him with.

When I asked him what he had been up to over the last few months he revealed that the Gillan project has taken much longer than expected as there had already been one album recorded about a year ago.

"It was a good album", said Glover, "but it was too much of a solo album and in the end Ian decided that he wanted to get a band together and he wanted to record something that would be much more representative of a band effort."

Gillan and Glover have been close friends for quite a while now, even before their days with Purple they were playing together in a band called Episode Six. In fact it was the band's drummer, Mick Underwood, who inadvertantly got Glover the job in Purple.

Glover explains: "Mick used to play in a band with Ritchie (Blackmore) and Ritchie phoned him up and said 'we're looking for a singer' and he said 'why don't you listen to Ian Gillan'. So they set up an audition and I used to write with Ian at the time so I just sort of tagged along with him 'cause they were also looking for a bass player.

"They must have decided that it would have been a good idea to get two guys who had written together because they were looking for writers."

I asked Glover how it felt to be producing an old colleague.

"It's quite enjoyable really. I learned a lot of production from Purple. I used to do a lot of mixing with little Ian (Paice). The way Purple used to record was to do a backing track first then the vocals. Ian (Gillan) would get most of the lyrics together, but having done that he would be lost for an idea, so it would be the pair of us who would decide what's to go on top.

"I virtually learned production by producing Ian. So doing it now in a way is almost like stepping back in the past."

Has Gillan's sudden revival given Glover any inclination to get back on the road?

"No, I've been through various stages of wanting to be back on the road. For two reasons, one because I miss the life to a certain extent for all the bad things you get on the road it is quite exciting. And the other reason is that I want to write in a group format 'cause writing on my own doesn't come out the same way. If I've got nothing to write for then I write rubbish. If I've got direction then I'll drag something out of the depths.

"Looking at the economics of getting on the road and looking at the things I'll have to give up I don't think I want to go back on the road. Before Deep Purple I had been on the road since 1965 professionally, that's a fair while.

"It was hard to settle down at first but now that I have settled down I find that I'm more creative all in directions. If I went on the road then I'd have to give all that up."

Even without the roadlife Glover is one of those people who has an endless source of energy and channels it in as many directions as possible. Although production probably supplies a major part of his income (he also co-owns a studios in London with Gillan), he certainly has no plans to make a future out of it and still feels that his talents are more musically inclined.

HE has already displayed his versatility with his musical interpretation of William Plomers book of poetry entitled 'Butterfly Ball' which has already seen one extravagent charity performance at the Albert Hall. There are plans for it to become a cartoon series for which Glover will provide incidental music.

"What 'Butterfly Ball' did for me was to make me strong enough not to reject my past, but not to emulate it. When I first did 'Butterfly Ball' I thought what's everyone going to expect of me? I'm not a household name I know. Everyone's not going to be waiting for my album with baited breath to see finally what the master's done. At the same time there is an awareness of me, somewhere along the line, and I don't want to let people down.

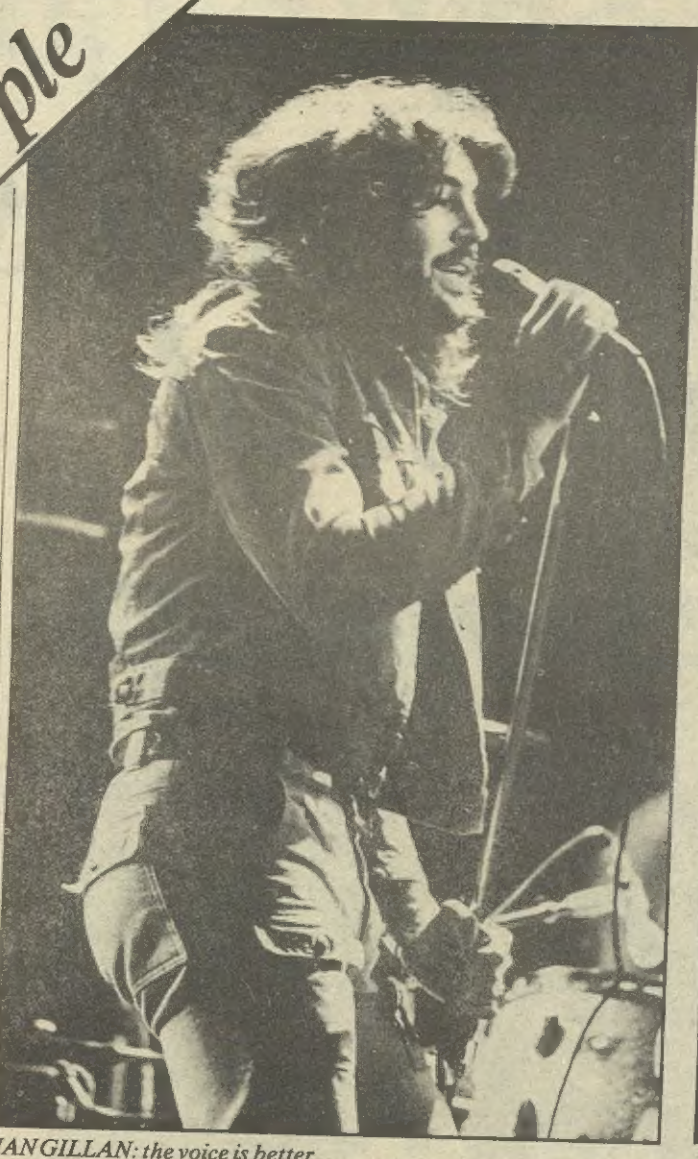
"It took quite a few months for me to get the courage to say 'I don't care what the people are going to think I'm going to do it the way I see it right? Now whatever I do in the future I'm not going to care whether it's rock or classical, I don't care what it is as long as it means something that's all that matters."

At this point a medium sized figure wearing a grey army type coat, looking slightly unshaven strolls up to the table to greet us. Why, it's Ian Gillan looking mucho less business like than indicated in recent photographs which showed him to be sporting a matching suit and paunch.

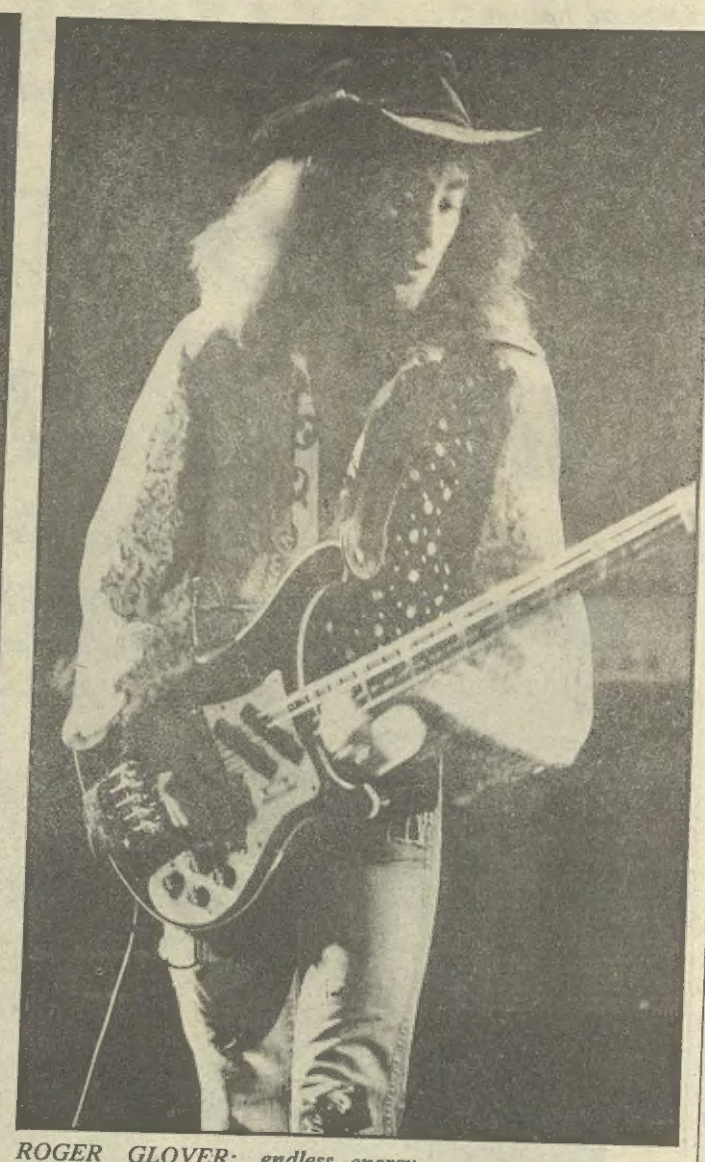
■ *Continued next page*

# Shades of Deep Purple

■ From page 35



IAN GILLAN: *the voice is better*



ROGER GLOVER: *endless energy*

NEXT to him is a tall skinny guy with long black hair who looks as if he's been on the road all of his life. This is John Gustafson and he probably has been on the road for the whole of his life. He is the bass player and vocalist with the Ian Gillan band.

The Ian Gillan band are as follows: Ray Fenwick (guitars), Gustafson (bass/vocals) and Mark Nussyef (drums/percussion) and Mike Maran (keyboards).

Both Gustafson and Fenwick are guys who have done excessive mileage on the road with musical histories as long as Elton John's optician bill. The former spawning from the Liverpudlian scene playing in such legendary units as The Big Three and the Mersey Beats.

In recent years Gustafson has played with Quatermass a brilliant trio who almost achieved the recognition they deserved, and more recently he has involved himself in session work like Fenwick whose most recent success was in a band called Fancy who released a hotted up version of 'Wild Thing'.

Nussyef is an American drummer, he's also a tutored percussionist and has toured with quite a few bands including, believe it or not, the Velvet Underground.

All parties have been associated with Purple in the past. Gustafson played in a short lived outfit called Hard Stuff who recorded on Purple records. Fenwick has been involved in various projects on the same label including some work on Jon Lord's concertos. While Nussyef played with Elf for a short while, playing on their last album 'Trying to Burn The Sun' before they split up to become Ritchie Blackmore's Rainbow.

I introduced myself to Gillan and we arranged to meet after the studios reception (which I shall delve into at greater length shortly in the more technical pages of SOUNDS).

Later that evening. . .

Glover and Mac (all the way from Munich's Musicland) set up the desk. Click! the tapes were rolling and the music began to surge out of the studios four powerful high quality speakers.

First impressions — the band sounded tight, straight to the point. Gillan certainly hasn't lost any of his vocal form, he can still sustain his banshee screams longer than any vocalist I know. The album has more depth, light and shade than I expected with some very nice slow tempo material. There's one number which Gillan shares some vocal interplay with Gustafson.

The only song that registered with me immediately was an interesting new interpretation of 'Child In Time' (which incidentally is the title of the album) which features some beaut soloing from Fenwick. It sounded like one helluva an album and an cassette version that's been rolling on my machine since I got it confirms this.

The Ian Gillan band are going to be one shit kickin' band to reckon with and if they sound as hot as they do in the studio live will undoubtedly become one of the big bands of '76.

Gillan and I sauntered back to the hotel leaving Glover and Mac with the rest of the songs that had to mixed, they had an early deadline to meet and needed all the remaining hours that were available.

Gillan, looking slightly worn, sat himself down and began to pour countless cups of tea as we both proceeded to stabilise our heads which were suffering from the evening's celebrations. He had been out for a meal with Glover, they had been reminiscing the old days, toasting them with cognac coffees which took their toll, the mixtures of wine and spirit I indulged didn't do me that much good either.

After being cut off from the music scene for so long Gillan seems to have renewed amount of energy.

"I'm like a kid again", he announced with unhidden glee, "I feel like an animal". Which is the exact opposite to the way things were when he left Purple.

"When I left Purple I was completely dissilusioned, I lost interest."

"Do you want to know why I left Purple?", he asked. I told him I thought it was basically through differences between him Blackmore.

"No that wasn't it", he replied firmly.

"We did have our differences but that wasn't it. In fact I've just spent a very pleasant weekend with Ritchie. I better get the record straight and tell you exactly why I left Purple.

"I left Purple because it was stagnating, that's why Ritchie left Purple too. The Purple I was in got into a formulated pattern and it was great to start with but then it started to be like . . . it was nothing to do with people, it was like being in the civil service. I left Purple for the same reason I fell out of love with Elvis Presley when he left the army and started doing 'Blue Hawaii'.

"I decided I'd never come to the point where I would have to compromise my artistic feelings, it was getting to the point where Purple records were being churned out. We started off as a progressive rock and there was no way we were a progressive rock band by 'Who Do We Think We Are?'."

Was this due to the output demanded from the band due to their success?

"No, I think it was laziness, fear. There was a difference in thought and attitude. There was a discrepancy in thought. I thought that 'Fireball' was a great progression. After 'Fireball' I felt we lapsed back into formulated music.

"Machine Head' was like harking back to 'In Rock', everything was the same formula. It was a shame really because there was so much talent in that band. I left Purple because I was bored, I was bored with the same old thing. I found myself pacing the shows."

I asked Gillan what his immediate feelings were when he left Purple.

"Horrible, I didn't even want to listen to their next album. I felt so horrible that I decided to leave, I refused to buy or listen to anything . . . I wouldn't even turn on the radio. I think it was a bit of sour grapes actually, 'cause I had been a part of it. I didn't want to leave but I had to.

Was he wary of singing again?

"Yeh, there was no direction at all, like the first solo abortive attempt I recorded. That was two years after I left Purple. But then I started working with Roger and the band and it all came back to me just like that! I'm singing better now then I ever sang with Purple."

Glover in fact played quite an important part in getting Gillan to return to the studios.

"I trust Roger implicitly, he's forced me into all the good things in life."

But what's really given Gillan his confidence is the band who he can't compliment enough. He even admits that at one time he thought: "I'd never be able to play with musicians of such high quality again . . . and I have!"

The whole band seem to have committed themselves fully to this venture with the same enthusiasm as Gillan, and you'll be able to appreciate that fact when you hear the album which should be out at the end of February.

"It's a fucking good line up", said Gillan, complimenting himself for his choice."

"They're a bunch of shitkickers. John (Gustafson) is great, he thinks the same way as I do. He's got a great voice, he pushes me.

"I'll tell you an interesting story. There's this song on the album called 'Down The Road'. I sung that for about ten hours and I just couldn't get it together. The other songs I did in one or two takes — great. Then Ray (Fenwick) said 'why don't you and John sing it together'. So we sang it together and did it in virtually one take. We drank twelve bottles of champagne, the two of us in about an hour and a half and the third verse sounds really drunk, it's really great, way over the top. I'm singing 'ahhhhh' with a really slow vibrato and John's going 'RAHHHHHHGGGG!!!' anywhere. And it came out really good. It means something. It's in your stomach, not your hair. I'm not interested in head music. It's shivers down your spine all the way down the line, that's what influenced me.

"Listening to Jackie Lomax, The Big Three, Cliff Bennett a million other people, Jerry Lee Lewis all these people who shivered my spine when I was a kid, they really knew how to sing, really singing with power not just warble, warble, warble. I think that sensuality has so much to do with rock. One of the first bands I saw live was Screaming Lord Sutch and The Savages and the guitarist used to hold the axe next to his groin like a phallic symbol and I thought 'wow, cock music!'.

"I like quiet music too, it doesn't have to be raving, any sort of music that has earthiness to it. Even something like Solomon Burke's 'Down In The Valley'. And it's sexual, rock and roll is very sexual, if music hasn't got something that appeals to my animal instincts then I don't like it.

"Anything that I record has got to have some earthy quality, basics, the lyrics on this album are all to do with sensuality, sexual connotations, everything is basic."

A good description of Gillan's music-basic, straight down the line. Having such a powerful line up around him is going to cause a lot of creative electricity. After playing in a band with as much individual talent as Purple Gillan obviously wanted equally potent musicians around him. I asked him if he liked competition in a band structure.

"Love it!" was the immediate reply, "Ritchie said to me, one day at the end of a series of rehearsals before Purple started going on tour, he came up to me and said' if you start putting on a good show, really doing well then I'm going to try and blow you out. That'll make you do better and it'll make me do better.' So me and Ritchie had a great threatening hold on Purple, the music never suffered. There was a great sense of competition between us.

"It's the same with this band. I set the band up I've chosen the people I wanted and that's it. I want them all to really entertain the people, I want them to come through. I don't want people to just come and see me, I want them to come and see the whole band. And if anyone in the band starts to shine through then it's going to make me work that much harder."

STRAIGHT after the album's finished the band are all going to meet up in Paris and begin rehearsals in preparation for their onslaught on the world. Gillan has already thought of some interesting visuals for the show, which I won't reveal, but he basically wants to keep the whole thing straightforward, although he's very concerned that the audience get their moneys worth.

"I mean, if we just played the music, then the kids could sit at home and listen to album, they've got to be entertained.

"By now the Swiss birds (of a feathered variety) were beginning to chortle their dawn chorus (the bastard things get up at four o'clock in the morning out there) and we were slowly beginning to dissolve into our seats. Before heading for our sleeping quarters I finally asked Gillan about the re-recording of 'Child In Time' the song that used to be a showcase for the man's amazing vocal delivery.

"The reason I recorded 'Child In Time' was because people told me it was a song that people would remember me by. Roger tonight said to me 'that's the best lyrics you've ever written'.

"I would say that 'Child In Time' is a connection. There's a certain amount of logic behind using it, because I suppose out of all the Purple songs, if somebody was to pick out a song which was my particular thing in Purple then I suppose they'd pick out 'Child In Time', 'cos I suppose it was more me than anything else I did with Purple.

"I was listening to some of the tracks earlier today and the only connection between this album and Purple is my voice, 'cause that doesn't change . . . maybe it's got a bit better since I left Purple. Ray doesn't play anything like Ritchie, Mike's keyboards don't sound anything like Jon and the same goes for the rest of the band.

"The whole sound is different, the whole attitude and approach is different. But you've got that connection, a link. So when I make my re-entry which is what it is after two and a half years since leaving Purple for those people who would like a link, something to relate to, then that song is there.

"I'm taking the same attitude I did with Purple: if people like it then I'm really pleased and I'll do everything I can to pursue the particular things they enjoy. If they don't like it then I'm really sorry, it's a shame, tough shit 'cos I'm really enjoying it."

**Lyrics published by HEC Music*